

Medical News from the British Empire

GREAT BRITAIN

THE BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION

Those fortunate enough to visit the British Empire Exhibition this year will find many exhibits of medical interest. Amongst others, we learn that in the Models Section there are two large models which bring out in sharp contrast the advantages of careful town planning. One model shows the condition into which an industrial town drifts if no effort is made to regulate the manner of its growth—factories are mixed up with residential sections, and shops with schools, dwellings are built at random, the river banks are crowded with houses, and the excess of smoke adds an aspect of grime and ugliness. In the other model one sees what may be accomplished with careful and scientific arrangement of a town; where the factories are in prescribed areas, with the prevailing wind being taken into account; the river front protected by gardens; provision made for transport of various kinds in the areas most in need of it, but with the minimum degree of interference with each other; and land reserved for food production near the town, with recreation grounds carefully placed so as to be easily accessible.

There are exhibits also with regard to the disposal of house refuse. The total amount of household refuse removed annually in England and Wales is nine million tons, made up in part of bones 27,000, glass 67,500, tins 135,000, paper 405,000, vegetable matter 720,000, with enormous quantities of cinders and dust. Plans are described for the sorting of this material so as to save much of it and so reduce the cost of disposal; special machinery being devised to sort the paper, extract the tins with magnets, and in other ways collect materials into groups. The tins can then be melted down and refined, cinders can be hardened into briquettes, and paper can be pulped and made into cardboard. There is also an exhibit illustrating the utilization of waste meat from public abattoirs.

PREVENTION OF RHEUMATIC FEVER

Considerable attention is being paid in England to the prevention of rheumatic fever. In this connection we note that Dr. Alfred Mantle of Harrogate, who has just been awarded the Liddle prize by open competition in this and other countries for the best essay on the cause and prevention of rheumatic fever, has decided to devote the £120 awarded, to propaganda work for educating the poorer classes in the prevention of rheumatism in childhood. Education of the public in this matter has already been begun by the Middlesex Hospital, which has issued seven pamphlets on the subject. It is endeavoured to teach that much heart trouble is of rheumatic origin and may be prevented if proper care be taken by an early examination of the throat and mouth and the treatment of certain conditions which may lead to rheumatism. The success which has attended the education of the public in the matter of tuberculosis might well be aspired to in the matter of rheumatic fever.

At a meeting of the Council of the British Medical Association in March last, there was a discussion as to the place of meeting for 1927, and in this connection very careful consideration was given to an invitation from the Canadian Medical Association to hold this meeting in Winnipeg. An invitation for the same year had also been received from Edinburgh, as 1927 would be the centenary of Lister's birth. No decision was then

made. Several members urged the acceptance of the Canadian invitation, Dr. Ridley Bailey remarking that until he went to the Montreal meeting he had never understood what hospitality really meant (!) Even admitting the attractiveness of such an invitation, however, the Chairman thought it might be best to meet in Great Britain; but it might be possible to send a contingent of members to the Canadian meeting. The question of closer co-operation with the Canadian Medical Association was taken under consideration; it was suggested to send two delegates to the meeting at Ottawa this year to discuss affiliation. The matter of the meeting place might then be discussed. Ultimately Sir Jenner Verrall was appointed as delegate to accompany the Medical Secretary.

The matter of State aid for hospitals in England is being taken up at a conference between the Executive Committee of the Labour party and representatives of various medical bodies. The discussion will centre around the question: "Should further State aid be given for the extension and maintenance of hospital accommodation." A *Memorandum on Hospital Policy* was issued by the Labour party in 1922, which took the view that the defects of the voluntary system could only be remedied by State control; it was held that efficiency was hampered by lack of organization and co-operation. Since then, however, much has been done by the British Hospitals Association to improve organization and management; the urgent need of more beds has been recognized; not only was it shown that voluntary effort had increased the number, but that more value is being got out of them; the suggestion that State control would gradually make deficiencies good, and undertake new construction as opportunity occurred, is actually being followed under the voluntary system; the unsatisfactory conditions under which nurses worked are being greatly improved; the falling-off of voluntary contributions is not so great; while in 1915 the deficit per available bed was £15, in 1922 it was only £1. These are some of the points brought out in a discussion regarding the possible advantages of State as compared with voluntary control. The State undoubtedly has in view a perfected development of the hospital system, but those responsible for the maintenance of the hospitals under the present voluntary system have ever in mind the danger of their becoming "the plaything of the politician." The profession "can never forget the dire result, so far as public health was concerned, of dragging the National Health Insurance Act in the mire of party politics."

Mr. Ramsay Muir is quoted as saying: "While the logical Socialist would eagerly seize the chance of organizing all hospitals in a systematic way under Government or municipal control, and placing them wholly on public funds, others, while recognizing the need for public aid... would on every ground prefer to make the utmost possible use of private and voluntary effort in a field in which it has done so much good work.... We are bound to recognize that there is no sphere in which private enterprise, though insufficient by itself, has been more beneficial, more original, more spirited, more sympathetic; no sphere in which personal devotion has been more abundant or more fruitful. It is impossible for any official public system wholly to replace this spontaneous outpouring of human kindness, and it would be the greatest of blunders to discard it as if it were of no value because it is not easily fitted into a neat official scheme."

Athletic training amongst students is receiving the attention of governing bodies of the Scottish Universities. A recent conference of four universities considered the suggestion that participation in athletics by all students be made compulsory, and eventually agreed on the motion "that the Conference urges upon the Courts and Senatus of all Scottish Universities the desirability of imposing upon each student on matriculation a levy, the sum so raised to be devoted to the maintenance of students' activities in the Scottish universities." A further resolution was adopted to the effect that the most important Scottish secondary schools should be visited annually with the object of interesting those who were preparing to join the universities in the widest aspect of university student life.

A further indication of the realization by the universities of the value in sport is given in the proposal that the Senatus should be approached with a view to instituting a mid-week half-holiday during the winter and spring terms to allow for athletic training. This arrangement apparently already exists at Aberdeen University, and to a certain extent also at Edinburgh.

H. E. M.

Sir Malcolm Morris died at Bordighera in February of this year. To the profession at large perhaps his

name will be always associated with dermatological work, for his textbook has a well-established fame, and he was interested in much that was allied to the subject; he was prominent in public work for the prevention of tuberculosis and leprosy; he was one of the first to begin the treatment of lupus with the Finsen light in London, and he was largely instrumental in founding the Radium Institute of London.

But his energy and activity of mind carried him much further both in writing and in other work. He was editor of the *Practitioner* for seven years; he wrote and helped in the writing of books on public health and general medicine; he was active in obtaining the appointment of a Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, and he worked zealously on the National Council for combating this disease. He was a Fellow of the Zoological Society, the Botanical Society, and the Sunday Concert Society, and he served on numerous Committees and Councils.

The merest sketch of his activities is enough to make it evident that he was a man with great powers of work, and was possessed of wide sympathies and had the desire for progress which is seen in great reformers. All these talents he employed and developed to the very utmost.

News Items

GENERAL

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science, while resembling the American Association for the Advancement of Science, nevertheless differs from it in certain particulars, and a few notes on its organization may be of interest to Americans and Canadians.

Objects.—"The objects of the British Association for the Advancement of Science are:—To give a stronger impulse and a more systematic direction to scientific enquiry; to promote the intercourse of those who cultivate science in different parts of the British Empire with one another and with foreign philosophers; to obtain more general attention for the objects of science and the removal of any disadvantages of a public kind which impede its progress."

Annual Meetings.—The Association, which was founded in 1831, meets annually for one week or longer at important centres, other than London, in England, and it occasionally meets in other parts of the British Empire. The Association has met in Canada on three previous occasions, viz. in 1884, 1897 and 1909. Other overseas meetings have been held once each in South Africa 1905, and Australia 1914. The average attendance at annual meetings of the Association for the 83 years previous to 1920 was 2,330. A proportion of the attendance consists always of residents in the locality where the meeting is held, but the large majority are visitors. The Toronto meeting affords an exceptional opportunity for intercourse between British, Canadian, American and European workers in science. A preliminary programme will be forwarded on application to the Local Secretary, British Association, Physics Building, University, Toronto, and those who intend to be present at the meeting are particularly requested to apply for this as soon as possible.

Membership.—No technical qualification is required on the part of an applicant for admission as a member of the Association, nor is there any limitation in respect

of nationality. The form of membership of most interest to Americans and Canadians, who are very cordially invited to join for 1924, is that of Annual Member.

Payment of \$7.50 made before or at the meeting entitles the Annual Member to attend the meeting and to receive the report. Payment of \$5.00 entitles the member to attend the Annual Meeting and the membership ticket admits the holder to any of the sectional meetings and to the various popular lectures, receptions, local excursions, etc., which are features of the meeting. Membership tickets for the meeting may be obtained from the local Hon. Treasurer, British Association, Room 50, Physics Building, University, Toronto; cheques should be made payable to the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Arrangements are being made with the Railway Companies for reduced rates on the return fares of those who hold membership cards. Hotel accommodation should be reserved in advance of the date of meeting.

Scientific Meetings.—The Inaugural General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 6th, when Major-General Sir David Bruce, K.C.B., F.R.S., will resume the Presidency of the Association in succession to Professor Sir Ernest Rutherford, F.R.S., and will deliver the Presidential Address. The Association is organized in thirteen sections designated as follows, with Presidents for 1924:—

- A.—Mathematical and Physical Science, Sir Wm. Bragg, K.B.E., F.R.S.
- B.—Chemistry, Sir Robert Robertson, K.B.E.
- C.—Geology, Prof. W. W. Watts, F.R.S.
- D.—Zoology, Prof. G. Elliott Smith, F.R.S.
- E.—Geography, Prof. J. W. Gregory, F.R.S.
- F.—Economic Science and Statistics, Sir William Ashley
- G.—Engineering, Prof. G. W. O. Howe.
- H.—Anthropology, Dr. F. C. S. Shrubbsall.
- I.—Physiology, Dr. H. H. Dale, C.B.E., F.R.S.
- J.—Psychology, Prof. W. McDougall, F.R.S.
- K.—Botany, Prof. V. H. Blackman, F.R.S.